

SEX AND GENDER DIFFERENTIATION IN HILDEGARD OF BINGEN AND EDITH STEIN

Two German Catholic women philosophers, separated in time by eight centuries, raised fundamental questions about sex and gender differentiation in human beings. Their efforts are particularly valuable for contemporary thought in the following three areas: 1) in the kinds of questions they asked, 2) in the methods they used to answer these questions, and 3) in the relatively balanced views of man and woman they supported by their answers. The theories of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) and Edith Stein (1892-1942) provide an historical basis from which to develop a contemporary theory of the respective identities of woman and man.¹

A few considerations of the differences in the background experience of the two Catholic thinkers are in order here. Hildegard, an aristocratic Benedictine Abbess, had her empirical research formed in part through her work as a physician-nurse in the hospice associated with her monastery; her intellectual judgments, on the other hand, were formulated as a result of her extensive study of sources in her monastic library.² Hildegard, whose work was formed within the framework of medieval cosmology and pre-Scholastic categories, was also somewhat limited by this framework and by a lack of consciousness of how historical and sociological factors influence gender identity.³ Edith Stein, an adult convert from Judaism, had her empirical research formed in part through her work as a nurse in a hospital for wounded soldiers during World War I; her intellectual judgments through her

formation in the German university system through which she gained a Ph.D., and in particular through her study of the works of Edmund Husserl and St. Thomas Aquinas.⁴ Edith Stein, whose work was formed within the framework of phenomenology and post-Scholastic categories, approached issues of sex and gender within the limitations of the method and categories of her education.⁵ These factors may make some of the specific views of Hildegard and Stein seem a little dated to the contemporary reader.

In addition, reflections on sex and gender differentiation are scattered throughout the works of both authors in an unsystematic manner and without identifying the priority of particular premises or conclusions.⁶ In spite of these concerns, and especially because there is a need to bring together in a systematic way the insights of these two important authors who gave so much thought to questions of sex and gender differentiation, I will attempt in this article to elaborate a cohesive structure within which to consider their views. Through summarization, abstraction, and the introduction of charts (a method which, unfortunately, may leave out the rich seminal process of the development of their thought), I will describe the core components of the thought of these two authors on this topic. In addition, by comparing and contrasting at certain points their theories with those found in Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, I will try to indicate where their views coincide and where they differ from the present views of the Holy Father.⁷ Finally, without entering into a detailed evaluation of specific aspects of Hildegard's or Edith

Stein's views of sex and gender, I will suggest some of the ways in which they have laid constructive foundations for approaching sex and gender differentiation, namely, through the range and depth of the questions they asked, through the particular method they employed which viewed the human being as having a hierarchically ordered identity, and through their striving towards a theory of genuine complementarity of man and woman.⁸

In 1932 Edith Stein, in "Problems of Women's Education," described the human being as having a "graded structure" in which each lower grade is incorporated and integrated into relatively higher grades of organization.⁹ These structures are derived from a study of the corporeal, psychic, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the human being. When the question of sex and gender differentiation is raised in the context of the study of the human being, these levels of graded structure may be considered within the framework of methods found in traditional academic disciplines. Stein, herself, decided to study woman from the multiple perspectives found in different academic disciplines.¹⁰ Accordingly, this article will be divided into the loose hierarchy of four areas of study which she identified as Natural Sciences, Liberal Arts (including the Social Sciences), Philosophy, and Theology.

Sex Differentiation According to the "Natural Sciences"

Hildegard of Bingen, obviously, did not have the benefit of modern scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, she approached sex

differentiation through the levels of analysis similar to those found today in physics, chemistry, and biology.¹¹ Working within the limits of a medieval conception of science, she asked whether sexual differentiation could be found at the most elementary level of organization.¹² Accepting a theory of four fundamental elements, previously identified by the Greek philosopher Empedocles, she asked how these elements might relate to the respective identities of woman and man. Her question is significant, because within traditional medieval cosmology, derived from the Aristotelian tradition, the hierarchy of elements, or fire, air, water, and earth, had been interpreted in such a way that the male emerged as the privileged type. In this view the two highest elements, fire and air, are found in greater amounts in the male, and the two lowest elements were greater in the female. Hildegard introduces a balance into the distribution of the elements. According to her, the highest and lowest elements (fire and earth) are found in greater quantities in the male, while the two middle elements (air and water) are present in the female.¹³

The evidence that Hildegard introduces to support her claims is usually "mixed" because it combines axiological and empirical information where today such information would be distinguished. For example, Hildegard offers a theological rationale for the relations of the elements to gender, namely the creation of Adam from the earth, and Eve from the flesh. At the same time she associates, as a result of her empirical observations, the primary sexual characteristic of childbearing with air, and secondary

sexual characteristics (a male's beard, for example), with earth and fire.¹⁴ Hildegard also claims that the 'female element air' tempers the character and leads it to self control. Consequently, an ideal man would have a strong amount of this female element to temper the predominance of fire in his nature.¹⁵

If Chemistry is the science that considers a higher level of organization composed of fundamental particles identified by Physics, then Hildegard describes the "chemistry" of sex and gender when she analyzes the function of the four humours (phlegm, blood, choler, and black bile) which were composed of the elements previously identified.¹⁶ Hildegard raises interesting questions about sex differentiation when she wonders how the balance of the different humours effects men and women. She claims that women have more humours, and in particular more of the humour blood, than do men."¹⁷ This preponderance of blood in women occurs in part because females have a greater balance of the element water.

More interesting, perhaps, is Hildegard's question about the relation of humours to character. Just as contemporary scientists might ask questions about the effect of different hormones on human behaviour, Hildegard analogously considers how bodily "chemicals," or the four humours within a particular type of woman or man, might relate to such characteristic themes as aggression, depression, skin tone, and sense of well being.¹⁸

At the biological level, which concerns itself with understanding the ways in which living organisms organize the lower levels of elements and compounds, Hildegard explores the way in

which reproduction functions. We find her introducing a sexual balance into a context of Western theory which had devalued the female contribution to the process of generation. While Hildegard agrees that only the male deposits fertile seed, she claims that the female warms it, and through the four humours strengthens the seed "until the human form develops out of it."¹⁹ Hildegard also asks how different kinds of blood in men might be related to the character of children produced through their seed. Anticipating, perhaps, questions of genetic disposition towards certain diseases or behaviour patterns, Hildegard answers these questions through the limited concepts of medieval science.

Hildegard also explores how menopause affects different kinds of women. Her questions probe not only biological disease patterns but also mental illnesses. In addition, she wonders how physical, chemical, and biological aspects of a woman's identity influence behaviour and character. In these kinds of questions she considers issues that move into ranges associated in contemporary science with physiology. Finally, Hildegard questions the variety of ways in which men and women interact with one another, and considers how these interpersonal dynamics relate to physical, chemical, and biological aspects of human identity.²⁰

In a short article, it is not possible to consider in depth the quality of Hildegard's answers to the questions she raised. However, by summarizing them in the charts below, it is possible to grasp the richness of the range of her intellect and to appreciate

her approach to questions concerning the simultaneous complexity and unity of the human being.²¹

**Hildegard's Approach to Sex Differentiation
through natural science**

Perspectives	male	human	female
"physics"	more of elements fire and earth	elements of fire, air, water, and earth	more of elements air and water
"chemistry"	less humours	humours of phlegm, blood, choler, and black bile	more humours
"biology"	deposits fertile seed	reproduces itself as living organism	warms and strengthens seed to termination

In addition to her differentiation of males from females, Hildegard also asks whether or not there were general kinds of structures of men and of women that could be developed as a theory of types.

Hildegard's Four Types of Women

Type I Type II Type III Type IV

muscular structure	very heavy	moderately heavy	delicate	meagre
blood	clean, red	whiter	drier	slimy
colour of skin	clear and white	sullen	pale	dark
fertility	moderate	very	partial	rare
menses	light	moderate	heavy	very heavy
character	artistic, content	efficient, masculine, strict	intellectual, benevolent, loyal, chaste	unstable, ill-humoured
possible diseases after early menopause	depression, melancholy, side pains, unhealthy glandular secretions	insanity, problems with spleen, dropsy, tumours	paralysis, unbalanced, liver problems, cancer	abdominal pains, spinal sprains, early death
attitude towards men	charming and healthy when with men	driven by sexual desire for men	loyal but can not keep men's interest	happier without men

Hildegard's Four Types of Men

Type I Type II Type III Type IV

blood	fiery	fiery and airy	airy and black bile	weak in all respects
colour of skin	red hue	mixed red and white hue	sombre	unclean and pale
fertility	very	moderate	partial	infertile
character	hearty and hale	balanced	very dangerous, no moderation	weak, effeminate
children	tend to be unrestrained, coarse-mannered	balanced, happy, well-mannered	mean or evil children	no children
attitude towards women	treat women like sex objects	honourable and fruitful relations with women	physically abusive of and hateful towards women	indifferent towards women

In spite of the appearance of biological determinism that her analysis of elements, humours, and types seems to support, Hildegard defends the claim that a man or woman has free will. She states that "reason comes into flower" in relation to bodily organs, so "we can gather up our free will and all our discipline so that we can master the attacks of the other humours and complete our action in a disciplined way."²² The introduction of free will shifts the focus of analysis away from the natural sciences to a higher level of organization within the human being, or the level in which consciousness and the psyche play a fundamental part. That is, through a conscious exercise of free choice, an individual may act in relation to his or her physical and bio-chemical identity. To understand this concept of freedom, it is necessary to move to the next level of the analysis of sex and gender differentiation.

Sex and Gender Differentiation According to the Liberal Arts and "Social Sciences"

At this point, the work of Edith Stein may be introduced into our analysis. Edith Stein's analysis goes far beyond that of her predecessor in its attention to the ways in which education and socialization affect the historical development of gender, in its attention to the approaches of different academic disciplines to the study of sex and gender, and in its questioning of the presuppositions of traditional categories when applied to issues of sex and gender. For example, Stein considers what different disciplines could bring to the study of man's and woman's identity. She asks how physiology differs from experimental psychology and

from humanistic psychology and again how these disciplines could be distinguished from sociology and anthropology²³ Instead of the generally mixed approach we found with Hildegard, with Stein we find a consciousness of the importance of distinguishing separate disciplines and then viewing the subject again through an interdisciplinary approach. At the same time we also find in her work a commitment to considering the person as a complete whole. Common to all of these disciplines, suggests Edith Stein, is the way in which "the *psychic life* conceived as a *uniform whole...* can neither be separated into its component parts nor reassembled into them."²⁴

The psychological approach to the human being reflects a higher order of organization than that found in the natural sciences because it includes reference to consciousness, or the psyche, and to self-consciousness as well.²⁵ An example of this developmental aspect of the history of thought is evident in a consideration of the typology introduced above by Hildegard. The medieval thinker simply uses a theory of typology without reflecting on its validity. Edith Stein, on the other hand, raises questions about the way in which typology relates to a psychology of the individual.²⁶ In addition to stating why she thinks a typology can be useful in areas of gender study, she also warns against its abuse, noting a "danger of taking the types as it finds them in each case to be something inflexible and permanent."²⁷

Edith Stein considers many different types of men and women in her essays. She refers to human types differentiated by class, age,

sex, occupation, station, nationality, and generation.²⁸ In addition, within the category of woman, she refers to five types of young girl.²⁹ From the stand point of the present considerations, we find of greater interest the questions she raises about types in general and the subsequent application of these questions to her fundamental gender types "masculine" and "feminine." Stein considers:

Which types deserve to be preserved? Which types need a specific educational program in order to change them? And which types can be set up as models, i.e. types into which we can try and ought to try to change the existing ones?³⁰

This approach allows Stein to question a classical differentiation of types which associated the masculine type with strength and the feminine type with weakness. For example, Hildegard often uses phrases such as 'manly virility,' 'feminine weakness' and 'soft womanly weakness.'³¹ She describes herself as "a tender and fragile rib" and "more than wretched in my existence as a woman."³² Edith Stein, on the other hand, was highly critical of this sort of attitude. She states, "There is still a multitude of thoughtless people satisfied with hackneyed expressions concerning the weaker sex or even the fair sex."³³ However, as will be seen later in the section on Theology, Hildegard and Stein accept a common belief that males, in the order of nature, are superior to females in some respects, although both authors believed that this relation was inverted in the order of grace, so that through faith women often appeared to have an advantage. At the same time as these theorists appeared to accept some grounds

for a sex polarity which privileged the male, they also sought to shift the emphasis to a complementarity in many areas of their theory. This shift is particularly evident in their analysis of the psychic life of men and women.

Both Hildegard and Stein are in agreement on a key aspect of a typology of masculine and feminine, namely that a man has both masculine and feminine characteristics and a woman has both masculine and feminine characteristics, although the relation of men and women to these characteristics is gender determined. If a person is male, then a more natural relation to the masculine and a more socialized aspect to the feminine characteristics is exhibited; while if a person is female, there is a more natural relation to feminine and a more socialized aspect to masculine characteristics. In the following chart, those specifically masculine and feminine characteristics noted by their positive and negative forms are summarized.³⁴

Stein's Types of Gender Differentiation

positive - feminine - negative		positive - masculine - negative	
tendency towards union	urge to lose the self in another human being	tendency towards detachment	brutal despotism over others and especially women
dedication towards developing others to completion	too much curiosity about others	dedication to a discipline	enslavement to work
orientation towards concrete whole person	placing too much emphasis on self or own family	orientation towards specialization	atrophy of one's humanity
special capacity for empathy	an inability to accept criticism without seeing it as an attack	special capacity for objectivity	degeneracy of too much abstraction

One limitation in Stein's analysis, which is also evident in Hildegard's listing of characteristics of different types of men and women, is the lack of prioritization in their works. There is no attempt to identify which masculine or feminine characteristics are closer than other characteristics to the identity of a male or female. Subsequent research on sex and gender needs to consider each different aspect identified by these two theorists, and to consider carefully the degree of closeness to nature and the effects of socialization before more definitive judgements can be made about the accuracy of the insights offered. At the same time, Hildegard and Edith Stein should be recognized as among the first Catholic writers to give serious attention to this area of sex and gender identity. They have elaborated a starting point for those of us who are interested in continuing this kind of research.

Hildegard of Bingen implies in her works that a man could have feminine characteristics and a woman masculine ones in both the positive and negative senses.³⁵ Edith Stein explicitly states this claim:

Man and woman have the same basic human traits, although this or that trait predominates not only in the sexes but also in respective individuals. Therefore, women may closely approximate the masculine type and conversely.³⁶

In fact, Stein argues that girls who appear to neglect the development of masculine characteristics should be educated in abstract subjects such as mathematics and metaphysics, and men should develop the capacity for empathy.³⁷ In fact, one fundamental set of questions raised in her works concerns the relation between

sexual differentiation in the body, gender differentiation in masculine and feminine characteristics, and the role of men and women to build up society.

Does the difference between man and woman involve the whole structure of the person or only the body and those psychic functions necessarily related to physical organs? Can the mind be considered unaffected by this difference?...If...the difference does involve the person's entire structure, then educational work must consider the specific structure of the masculine and feminine mind. Furthermore, if the nature of each individual contains both masculine and feminine elements and if only one of these elements is predominant in each person, would not individuals of both species then be needed to represent perfectly the human species as a whole? Could it not be fully represented by one individual?³⁸

Answers that are proposed to these questions reveal the extent to which Edith Stein views the person as a completely integrated being. She argues that the particular structure of the female body makes it oriented towards supporting new life growing within it during pregnancy.³⁹ This characteristic becomes the fundamental axis of her theory of woman's identity. Even though Stein's essays focus more specifically on women, the premise that a man's identity contains a similar kind of unity is implied. The detachment of seed in the reproductive function in the male is the corporeal structure that gives a natural tendency in the male towards similar psychic, intellectual, and spiritual orientation towards detachment. It is important to note that Stein is not suggesting a biological determinism here.⁴⁰ She believes, however, that in order to grasp the essential reason for the relationship of body and psyche, it is

necessary to move to a still higher level of organization of the human being, and this level is more properly approached through philosophy. Stein claims: "the problems of philosophy begin where the work of positive sciences leave off."⁴¹

Sex and Gender Differentiation according to Philosophy

Edith Stein claims that while psychology examines consciousness and the psyche through personal experience and empirical observation, philosophy seeks the interior principle of the organization of the whole human being through exercising the function of "cognition."⁴² This function seeks to uncover a permanence of structure that persists through changes. Stein considers whether or not there is any permanent structure of the female or male that persists through the variable types mentioned above. If a permanence in structure can be identified, then this constitutes an "inner form." If an inner form exists, then it delineates what Stein calls a "species." Genera is divided into species: "...that is, every basic mould of being is divided into its subordinate mould."⁴³ The cognitive task of philosophy is "to expound on species."⁴⁴

In the case of the "human species" the inner form is called the soul, and the structure of the species involves a conjugate "lived-body-soul" which is always existentially unified, and separable only through cognition.⁴⁵ In her pre-Scholastic vocabulary, Hildegard of Bingen also emphasizes the unity of the human being. Employing metaphorical language, she describes the

function of soul as the organizing principle of the human being. In one text she depicts the soul as "wandering everywhere" through the body "like a caterpillar spinning silk."⁴⁶ In other texts, she suggests that the soul acts in the human being in the same way in which "a bee forms honey in its comb" or "the soul flows through the body like sap through a tree."⁴⁷ In addition to the metaphors she uses to stress the integral unity of soul and body, Hildegard also explicitly states that the soul is the principle of the organization of the human body. It "gives life to the body," and it "rules the whole body as its foundation," it understands, it senses, it leads the person into action through the exercise of the will, and it is responsible for reasoning.⁴⁸ In her post-Scholastic vocabulary Edith Stein defends the same point of view without using metaphors, but by stating simply that the lived-body-soul is a unified organized structure of informed matter in the individual human being.⁴⁹

While Hildegard's analysis of soul considers only the human species, Edith Stein raises the further question of whether or not there might be subspecies identified as "species of woman" and "species of man." She claims: "It is quite clear that the species is the core of all questions concerning woman."⁵⁰ Stein was not the first to consider this possibility, for Aristotle had asked the same thing in *Metaphysics X,9*: "One might raise the question, why woman does not differ from man in species, when female and male are contrary and their difference is a contrariety."⁵¹ Because Aristotle thought that the female was a privation of the male, he

concluded that women did not constitute different species from man, but rather that the human form was in the female in an imperfect manner.

Stein rejects this solution to the problem of how to explain the permanence of difference between men and women, presumably because it rested on a premise of an essential natural inferiority of the female.⁵² She concludes that the inner form which determines structure, or soul, in woman is different from the inner form, or soul in man, not in respect to their equal participation in the human species, but in their participation in a complement subspecies. In the following passage we find Stein identifying the main areas in which this difference of interior structure can be studied:

I am convinced that the species *humanity* embraces the double species *man* and *woman*. That the essence of the complete *human* being is characterized by this duality; and that the entire structure of the essence demonstrates the specific character. There is a difference, not only in body structure and in particular physiological functions, but also in the entire corporeal life. The relationship of soul and body is different in man and woman; the relation of soul to body differs in their psychic life as well as that of the spiritual faculties to each other. The feminine [female human] species expresses a unity and wholeness of the total psychosomatic personality and a harmonious development of faculties. The masculine [male human] species strives to enhance individual abilities in order that they may attain their highest achievements.⁵³

This paragraph contains the core of Edith Stein's analysis of the separate species of woman and of man. It implies that differences between a man and a woman are not accidental, but essential to

their respective identities.⁵⁴ It is important to note that Stein's theory has a three-fold level of analysis: species of humanity, sub-species of woman and of man, and sub-category of individuality. The latter category, or individuality, is crucial to her philosophy, because through it an individual person, as a real existent, forms a particular identity as a man or a woman which is oriented, but not bound, by characteristics identified as masculine or feminine.⁵⁵

The chart below summarizes the content of Stein's theory of the three levels of human identity:

Stein's philosophy of Species⁵⁶

HUMAN SPECIES

SPECIES OF WOMAN

SPECIES OF MAN

1. soul more intensely connected to all parts of the body; 2. female corporeal structure of the body oriented towards supporting growth of new life within as mother	lived-body-soul unity female/male structure	1. soul more detached from parts of the body; 2. male corporeal structure of the body oriented towards reproducing by detachment of seed as father
1. receives world inwardly through emotions and more affected inwardly by the lived experience of the body; 2. intellect judges world received emotionally through comprehension of value of existent in its totality 3. will emphasizes personal and holistic choices	faculties: sensitive (emotions) intellect will feminine/masculine structure	1. receives world through intellect and less affected by the lived experience of the body; 2. intellect judges the world received intellectually in a compartmentalized way; 3. will emphasizes exterior, specialized choices
feminine professions: nursing, social work, education, holistic medicine, including also gynaecology and paediatrics, governess, translator, editor, research in humanities and arts, bureaucratic work, administration, and politics	Individual professional work woman/man structure	masculine professions: factory work, hard physical labour in industry, trade, and agriculture, business, national or municipal service, technology, trade, legislature, chemistry, mathematics, theoretical physics, clerical work, administration, natural science, philosophy, and specialized medicine

Two important points about this analysis of species need to be made: the first concerns the freedom of the individual to develop a unique personal identity, and the second concerns the value for society of the complementary identities of women and men. Stein is adamant that individuals can freely choose to develop characteristics different from the ones to which they have a natural attraction through the different structure of their lived-body-soul inner form. In one context she states: "And who would deny the intellect and will of girls? That would be questioning their full humanity."⁵⁷ Or conversely, a man can, through free actions of the will either surrender to or reject emotional stimulations or interior and exterior formative influences.⁵⁸ Human life is always individual, and therefore, actions within it can express varying degrees of freedom.

In addition, even though a permanence of inner form and structure is identified in the concept of human species, or species of woman and species of man, Stein argues that species is a developmental concept. Consequently, the inner form gives a certain starting point to the structure, but the determination of the individual life by the free man or woman offers a wide range of possibilities which are much broader than the starting point:

the species does not come about in ready-made form at the beginning of existence; rather, the individual develops progressively in a process dependent on time. This process is not unequivocally predetermined but depends rather on several variable factors, among others, on man's freedom which enables him to work towards his own formation and that of others.⁵⁹

This means that the individual woman has an interior structure that can be characterized as the nexus {woman-female-feminine and masculine}, and the individual man has an interior structure that can be characterized as the nexus {man-male-masculine and feminine}. As the individual freely works within a dual species of human and either as man or woman, he or she continues to unfold, through free acts, the temporal development of a particular sub species from complementary male or female starting points. Stein concludes: "the species man and woman are also fully realized only in the total course of human development."⁶⁰

Concerning the second point mentioned above, Edith Stein does not imply that women ought to practice only feminine professions or men masculine professions. She states clearly: "...there is no profession which cannot be practised by a woman."⁶¹ In fact, she argues more strongly that it would be very good for society in general if women moved into areas which had been predominately held by men previously. She concludes: "Thus the participation of women in the most diverse professional disciplines could be a blessing for the entire society, private or public, precisely if the specifically feminine ethos would be preserved."⁶² By 'feminine ethos' she means the tendency to look towards the holistic, to be concerned with the development of people, to practice empathy as a genuine ground for inter-subjectivity, and so forth. In another example, Stein ponders the "great sickness of our time" which she identifies as an "inner disunion, a complete deficiency of set convictions and strong principles, an aimless drifting." She goes

on to argue that "only whole human beings as we have described them are immune to the contemporary sickness." Then she concludes: "Consequently, when women themselves are once again whole persons and when they help others to become so, they create healthy, energetic spores supplying healthy energy to the entire national body."⁶³ One of the ways a woman can move towards this integral wholeness is by educating herself in part through traditional masculine disciplines such as the natural sciences or philosophy, at the same time as she becomes more conscious of her own natural orientation towards feminine values.

The task for an individual woman or an individual man, then, becomes one of freely developing the self within a double species of human-man or human-woman. Philosophy provides the cognitive framework of inner structures within which this temporal activity can take place. If Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein are correct in holding that the human being is an integral entity of lived-body-soul, and if Stein is also correct in supposing that there is a difference in inner form in the male human being and female human being which unfolds within this unity, then it would follow that there are definite characteristics of this difference which provide fundamentally different starting points for the development of individual identity in a particular woman or a particular man.

The empirical sciences, limited as they are to describing external behaviour, cannot identify these characteristics. Stein states directly: "statistics are of little help" in determining what is truly female and male or feminine and masculine.⁶⁴

Moreover, since women have masculine characteristics and men feminine characteristics, it is not possible to reach an understanding of the interior structure of the male or female person by an empirical methodology alone.⁶⁵ The cognition of this inner structure of a species woman and a species man may only be discovered through a thinking process proper to philosophy.

Again it is worth noting, that although Edith Stein has begun to identify particular characteristics as masculine and others as feminine, and in addition, although she has also sought to show a link between these characteristics and the inner structure of the male and female human being, her analysis stops short of prioritizing the characteristics in degrees of essential relationship to man's and woman's identity. This careful analysis still needs to be done, and it is a central task for contemporary research on sex and gender to consider. This research is particularly important in a contemporary philosophical context which is often influenced by a Cartesian approach to the person in which the mind and body are separated, and the centre of the self is located in a sexless rational ego. In addition, post-Modernism, which further undermines a theory of the integral unity of the human being by denying even a centre of the self, has as one of its aims the dismissal of essential sex and gender characteristics altogether. One of the effects of this Cartesian and post-Modern mentality is the impression that masculine or feminine characteristics are completely socially constructed and that they have no relationship to the corporeal structure of the human being.

Edith Stein's analysis directly challenges this assumption. Since the foundation of her philosophy is the assumption of the integral unity of the human being as a lived-body-soul entity, it would seem that a Catholic philosophy which also accepts this premise, would be well served by a serious investigation of her claims.

Sex and Gender Differentiation According to Theology

If we consider man and a woman, moving from an analysis of their interior structures towards a consideration of their interpersonal relations and their relations with God, then we come to a still higher level of organization than has been previously discussed in this article. Edith Stein suggests that "Theology seeks to establish woman's unique nature according to divine revelation."⁶⁶ Here, theological method draws upon Scripture, teachings of the Church Doctors and Fathers, Dogma of the Church, and genuine prophetic revelations of the faithful.

Both Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein made significant contributions to the theology of sex and gender differentiation. Hildegard's writings, drawn from her analyses of several 'illuminative' mystical experiences, filled three major texts, shaped her voluminous correspondence with Abbots, Bishops, Popes, religious men and women, and formed the content of her many speeches given in her wide travels.⁶⁷ Edith Stein's writings, drawn from a primarily 'purgative' mystical life, were systematically written after her conversion to Roman Catholicism and entrance into a Carmelite convent, and formed the interior shape of her life

which ended tragically in a concentration camp at Auschwitz.⁶⁸ In spite of these very different backgrounds and experiences, the theology of woman and man that Hildegard and Stein propose have some interesting similarities.

For both authors three central mysteries are: Creation, Fall, and Redemption. Since issues about sex and gender are found in all three mysteries, each one will be considered briefly in turn. For Hildegard, "the human species is completely the image of God."⁶⁹ With the creation of the first human beings, Adam and Eve, this image of God was represented in the pro-creative power of humanity and in the different ways in which woman and man reflect this creative power:

So God gave the first man a helper in the form of woman, who was man's mirror image, and in her the whole human race was present in a latent way. God did this with manifold creative power, just as God had produced in great power the first man. Man and woman are in this way so involved with each other that one of them is the work of the other [*opus alterum per alterum*]. Without woman, man could not be called man; without man, woman could not be named woman. Thus woman is the work of man, while man is a sight full of consolation for woman. Neither of them could henceforth live without the other. Man is in this connection an indication of the Godhead while woman is an indication of the humanity of God's Son. And thus the human species sits on the judgment seat of the world. It rules over all creation.⁷⁰

While there are so many aspects of this passage that could bear consideration, we will mention here the "mirroring" of woman and man and the view that woman and man are the "work" of one another. In these concepts Hildegard seems to be establishing a horizontal

basis for complementarity between women and men, that is, that they are significantly different and simultaneously equal in dignity and worth. Secondly, she mentions the theme that man "indicates" more the Divine aspect of Christ's nature, and woman "indicates" more the human aspect of Christ. In these concepts Hildegard is positing a vertical dimension to their interrelatedness. If we consider that it is through Christ's human nature that He experienced suffering, passion, and death, and through his Divine nature that he experienced the resurrection, then we can see the indissoluble bond of the Divine and Human nature of Christ reflected in Hildegard's claim that man and woman could not "live without one another."

The mysterious way in which woman and man are created in the image of God is also considered by Edith Stein. She asks: "To begin with, where do we have the concrete image of total humanity? God's image walked amongst us in human form, in the Son of Man, Jesus Christ."⁷¹ She calls God the Father "the archetype of all personality."⁷² Then, considering the Third Person of the Trinity, she asks: "In this womanhood devoted to the service of love, is there really a divine image? Indeed, yes...But such love is properly the attribute of the Holy Spirit. Thus we can see the prototype of the feminine being in the Spirit of God poured out over all creatures."⁷³

While Edith Stein associates the Blessed Virgin Mary with the most perfect embodiment of this feminine attribute of the Holy Spirit, Hildegard's theology of Divine Feminine attributes extends the core concept to include feminine personifications of Caritas,

or Divine Love, and Sapientia, or Divine Wisdom.⁷⁴ Man and woman have a real "lived-body-soul" structure that reflects the Divine nature through a male or female body,⁷⁵ through a particular relation as starting points to feminine and masculine characteristics, and through their free will choices determining their unique identities as a woman or a man.

Edith Stein's theological understanding of the way in which a human being is created "in the image of God" adds a further dimension to the previously articulated conjugate "lived-body-soul" to become "lived-body-soul-spirit" as a trinitarian structure of the human being as person.⁷⁶ From the perspective of revelation, man and woman have an eternal dimension, a capacity to participate in Divine Life, through their spirit. When this capacity is exercised, the human being, which was only considered as an individual member of the human species, evolves to become a unique person, drawn into eternal life. Stein states:

If we go back to the root of the human being, then, we find the threefold direction of unfolding; fashioning of the lived-body; fashioning of the soul; unfolding of the spiritual life. All this accomplishes the style of form of the soul and yet is one in its threefold effects of form.⁷⁷

The "unity of the three" lived-body, soul, and spirit are described by Stein repeatedly as the "image of the Divine Trinity."⁷⁸ This concept is expressed in many different forms by Stein. The "human being is corporeal-psychical-spiritual being," and an "I, soul, spirit, person."⁷⁹ Her description brings about a new emphasis which distinguishes it from a traditional Augustinian theory that

the individual reflects the Trinity through the intellect, memory, and will. Instead, for Edith Stein, the image of the Trinity includes reference to the corporeality of the lived body, which is either male and female, the masculine and feminine dynamics of the human psyche, and the realm of freedom in the soul and spirit which enables the person to define the self, in cooperation with other persons, as a "conscious and free I."⁸⁰

The context in which these free acts are expressed is prescribed by the mystery of the Fall, in which the original human beings, Adam and Eve, rejected the original relations offered to them by the Creator. When we consider humanity in its fallen condition we are considering the powerful struggle with the effects of sin. When the issue of sex and gender is directly considered, then we reflect on the question of whether sin affects women differently than it does men.

Hildegard gives considerable attention to the causes and effects of the Fall.⁸¹ If we focus on just one of these, the changed relation of woman and man, we will see her in the *Scivias* describing a rupture in both inner harmony and inter-subjective relations as the effect of sin. Hildegard claims, according to one translation of the *Scivias* that "Creation, which had been subjected to him in service, now opposed itself to him;" and, according to a second translation of the same passage that "woman who had been subjected to that man in his service now opposed herself to him."⁸²

Hildegard thought that after creation, but before the fall woman was subject to man without opposition. This followed from her

interpretation of the *Genesis* account of creation of the male human being first, which gave him a kind of natural pre-eminence. Edith Stein also suggests that "a certain pre-eminence is indicated in that man was created first."⁸³ So both authors believe that in pre-lapsarian relationship the leadership of man and the subjection of woman was harmonious and freely given and received, until it was disrupted by the introduction and acceptance of evil.

The consequences of the Fall affect men and women differently. Stein claims: "...the relations of the sexes since the Fall has become a brutal relationship of master and slave."⁸⁴ One could say that men and women suffer from different kinds of things. A man suffers through his "sweat" and "toil" of enslavement to, and alienation from his work, through his "brutal despotism" and exploitation of woman in his call as husband, and in a further decadence of either neglect or domination in the way he lives out his "original call of fatherhood."⁸⁵ A woman suffers through her pain in bringing forth life, through her servile dependence on man as spouse and wife, and through "distortions and alienation in her spiritual life."⁸⁶

Therefore, while the primary cause of suffering in both man and woman is due to a disorder within the faculties (the senses versus the spirit and the will versus the intellect) and a disorder in the relation with God, since woman's and man's original nature is different, the particular ways in which this suffering manifests itself will also be different in some respects. One could say that

men and women are "complement co-sufferers at the same time as they are "co-responsible" for humanity."⁸⁷

This historical context of a fallen state of humanity is transformed in Hildegard's and Stein's theology by a belief in redemption through Jesus Christ. Edith Stein proclaims: "The Lord clearly declared that the new kingdom of God would bring a new order of relationship between the sexes, i.e., it would put an end to the relationships caused by the Fall and would restore the original order."⁸⁸ According to Stein, the original order of the pre-eminence of man is found in Christ's Incarnation as a male human being; and the female human being, whose special domain is the direct battle with evil ('an enmity between the woman and the serpent'), is expressed in its original nobility through Mary's role in the Incarnation.⁸⁹ She concludes that Christ, as fully God and fully man, is the Redeemer, while "Mary is the paragon of the whole Church and of all the redeemed."⁹⁰

For Hildegard, the redemptive aspect of woman is also portrayed through a feminine personification of Synagogue and Church. "...You see the image of a woman, pale from her head to her navel; she is the Synagogue, which is the mother of the incarnation of the son of God."⁹¹ This motherhood of Christ is shared by motherhood of the Church, "...He chose the Church as His Bride to be a mother to the believing peoples to restore salvation."⁹² So for Hildegard, the quality of bringing forth new life is introduced as a feminine reality at the level of Mary, of Synagogue and Church, and of individual vocation.

Hildegard elaborated a theology of vocation in a ranking of a hierarchy of vocations from the lowest (life in the world), through Clerical Priesthood, to the highest (Religious life bound by vows). Thus, she implied that the model of a religious woman, as spouse of Christ, was the most perfect model.⁹³ Edith Stein also admires the religious state as the highest vocation: "To be the Spouse of Christ is the most sublime vocation which has been given."⁹⁴ However, she adds that not only is this vocation, which has as its prime model consecrated women religious, extended to male religious, but to clerical and lay Christians as well: "...the whole Church and every Christian soul are called the "Spouse of Christ."⁹⁵

At the same time as the woman as Spouse of Christ is representative of the perfect vocation, because of her capacity to welcome, foster, and develop the new Divine life, so a man in the Person of Christ represents the perfection of humanity itself.

Whether man or woman, whether consecrated or not, each one is called to the imitation of Christ. The further the individual continues on this path, the more Christlike he will become. Christ embodies the ideal of human perfection: in Him all bias and defects are removed, and the masculine and feminine virtues are united and their weaknesses redeemed; therefore, His true followers will be progressively exalted over their natural limitations. That is why we see in holy men a womanly tenderness and a truly maternal solicitude for the souls entrusted to them while in holy women there is manly boldness, proficiency, and determination.

We are thus led through the imitation of Christ to the development of our original human vocation which is to present God's image in ourselves: The Lord of Creation, as one protects, preserves, and advances all

creatures in one's own circle; the Father, as one begets and educates children for the kingdom of God through spiritual paternity and maternity.⁹⁶

The claim that an important aspect of the vocation of man and woman, regardless of whether it is in the lay, clerical, or religious state, is to imitate Christ through developing positive masculine and feminine qualities, is often repeated by Edith Stein. "God created humanity as man and woman, and He created both according to His own image. Only the purely developed masculine and feminine nature can yield the highest attainable likeness to God."⁹⁷

When Edith Stein asks one of her central questions about vocation she points to the way in which men and women have a different challenge in this duty to become fully human through the integration of masculine and feminine characteristics. She asks: "Yet, what does *to be called* mean? A call must have been sent from someone, to someone, for something in a *distinct manner*.⁹⁸ She asks again: "to what are man and woman called?"⁹⁹ It would appear that there is a two-fold answer to this question: a man must come to know his basic male identity through nature and through grace and a woman to know her basic female identity through nature and grace. The call issued to a man or a woman, then, has certain aspects that make it clearly 'in a distinct manner.' Edith Stein also classifies vocations into the categories of masculine and feminine, but she does not argue that they should be limited to men and women, other than in the case of sacramental Priesthood.¹⁰⁰

As an educator Edith Stein identifies the steps through which this process of active self-formation takes place. She claims that the "first fundamental formation happens within the soul" in which the inner form of a man or a woman resides, and this inner form of a particular male or female human being "urges the evolution into a certain direction" of a fully mature unique man or woman. This evolution would involve a recognition of the male or female starting point of the lived-body-soul unity which is different for males and females.¹⁰¹

Stein then identifies the second step in which the soul, and its psychical organs of sense, reason, and emotions, needs interior and exterior materials through which to develop. She states: "other forces accompany this first one, some from without and some from within."¹⁰² Here socialization and education have an important formative role to play and the male or female learns about masculine and feminine aspects of human identity within a particular culture.

The formative material needs to be integrated, through a third step, which involves integration through free choice of the will. An individual "can open himself up to the formative influences or cut himself off from them."¹⁰³ Here the man, through free acts becomes a unified nexus of {male-masculine and feminine-man} and woman a unified nexus of {female-feminine and masculine-woman} through free acts.

Finally, in the fourth step, Edith Stein identifies the supernatural dimension of man's and woman's identity through the

addition of spirit to the lived-body-soul structure previously identified. She claims that this dimension of human life goes far beyond the previous ones: "...there is only one formative power which is not bound to the limits of nature, but, on the contrary, can transform the inner form further and from within; that is the power of grace."¹⁰⁴ Through receptivity to the redemptive action of grace, the individual man or woman can work to become more complete persons, and thereby bear witness in their own gift of self in response to the call to be more and more effectively conformed to the image of God.

Further Developments in Muleris Dignitatem

This systematic study of Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein has probably raised more questions than it has answered. The first thing that must be noted is that these two theorists are both significant because of the depth and range of questions they asked about the meaning of sex and gender within the context of a living Catholic faith. Secondly, for the most part they both tried to develop a balance in their theories of the respective identities, so that men and women are seen to be in complement relationship.

At times their forms of complementarity seem rigid and also prone to a polarity interpretation, (for example, in the area of the natural subjection of woman to man). Neither of them foresaw contemporary development in Papal teachings which supports a theory of "mutual subjection" of spouses in marriage, for instance. In The Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* this development is made

explicit. Pope John Paul claims: "in the relationship between husband and wife the 'subjection' is not one-sided but mutual."¹⁰⁵ Referring to this call to mutual subjection as an "innovation" of Christ's redemption, the Holy Father emphasizes the importance of this new direction:

the awareness that in marriage there is mutual 'subjection of the spouses out of reverence for Christ,' and not just that of the wife to the husband, must gradually establish itself in hearts, consciences, behavior and customs.¹⁰⁶

It is not surprising, perhaps, that Hildegard and Edith Stein followed the tradition of their times in understanding the subjection of woman to man to be natural and one-sided. Pope John Paul II, however, emphasizes that one-sided subjection is more a result of the fallen condition of humanity, and that mutual subjection, flowing from mutual self-gift, is present in the redemptive condition of humanity.

Another way of seeing this shift in thought is to consider the traditional attempt to bring about a balance in the relationship between man and woman by a method of compensation. The traditional view can be characterized simply as: if woman is weaker by nature, then she is stronger by grace; or if she is inferior in creation, then she is superior in redemption. Pope John Paul II is shifting the original ground of comparison of woman and man to a ground of equality at the level of creation. He refers to "the dignity belonging to women from the very 'beginning' on an equal footing with men" and states that "both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree, both are created in God's image" or further "man

is a person, man and woman equally so."¹⁰⁷ John Paul II describes men and women as created different and equal in dignity and worth, but as tending towards inequality in their relationship as a result of the fall. He identifies as the inheritance of an "inclination to sin" the situation in which woman becomes the "object" of "domination and male possession:"

Therefore when we read in the biblical description the words addressed to the woman: "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16), we discover a break and a constant threat precisely in regard to this "unity of the two" which corresponds to the dignity of the image and likeness of God in both of them. But this threat is more serious for the woman, since domination takes the place of "being a sincere gift" and therefore living "for" the other: "he shall rule over you." This "domination" indicates the disturbance and loss of the stability of that fundamental equality which the man and the woman possess in the "unity of the two:" and this is especially to the disadvantage of the woman, whereas only the equality resulting from their dignity as persons can give to their mutual relationship the character of an authentic "*communio personarum*".¹⁰⁸

A renewed equality between a woman and a man is able to be considered, according to the Holy Father, in the context of the redemptive work of Christ in the hearts of men and women and in the works which call them into a new relationship of complementarity through integral mutual self-gift.

At times both Hildegard and Edith Stein appear to support a theory of fractional complementarity, rather than the full integral complementarity which Pope John Paul II appears to suggest.¹⁰⁹ By

fractional complementarity is meant a rigid separation of roles in which woman provides one set of characteristics and the man the other, and together they make up one whole being. By integral complementarity is meant instead a theory in which an individual woman or individual man are both complete whole beings with the full range of masculine and feminine characteristics integrated within, and together they begin to form a community of persons which is more than the two of them considered separately.

In its crude form, fractional sex complementarity would imply that a female ought to develop only feminine characteristics and a male only masculine characteristics. In this view, often common in Enlightenment thinking, a male and female complement would make a single human being. Edith Stein rejects this simple view and criticizes this for what she calls a "feminine singularity" or a "masculine singularity."¹¹⁰ Both Stein and Hildegard argue for a male or female complex identity in which masculine and feminine characteristics are developed in their positive form in both individuals. They are careful to qualify their theories of masculine and feminine types so that there is not a rigid identification of male-masculine-man and female-feminine-woman, which is the usual narrow basis for a fractional sex complementarity. Instead, they defend the idea that it is important for both women and men to have masculine and feminine characteristics, and defend the subsidiary claim that a woman has a different relation to these characteristics than does a man.

At the same time, neither Stein nor Hildegard anticipated the contemporary Papal teachings which understand the complement relation of an individual man with an individual woman as mirroring the Trinity. In fact, Stein states that her rejection of this view follows from Augustine's and St. Thomas' example.¹¹¹ However, in *Mulieris Dignitatem* we find Pope John Paul II leading us into new ranges of understanding about how communities of persons can image the Divine Communion of Persons:

The fact that man 'created as man and woman' is the image of God means not only that each of them individually is like God, as a rational and free being. It also means that man and woman, created as a 'unity of the two' in their common humanity, are called to live in a communion of love, and in this way to mirror in the world the communion of love that is in God, through which the Three Persons love each other in the intimate mystery of one divine life.¹¹²

Integral sex complementarity has as its foundation the belief that a man and a woman are each whole and integral, and that in their mutual gift of self to the other, they enter into a union that is more than either of them considered separately, and that is blessed with fertility. In fact, the complement bonding of a man and a woman serves as the prime model for communion of persons because of this blessing of fertility.

Fertility expresses itself in different ways for those called into fatherhood and those called into motherhood. Again in *Mulieris Dignitatem* we find: "the eternal mystery of generation which is in God himself, the one and Triune God (cf. Eph. 3:14-15) is reflected in the woman's motherhood and in the man's fatherhood."¹¹³ At the

outset, the mother generates within herself and the father generates outside the self. This shared parenthood has different dynamics biologically, psychically, intellectually, and spiritually. Edith Stein recognized this core area of difference in the corporeal-soul-spirit structure of a woman and man. This aspect of her view is clearly echoed in *Mulieris Dignitatem* which stresses the unique way that God entrusts the developing human being to woman because of her female identity.¹¹⁴

In conclusion, then, in spite of some of the historical limitations seen in Hildegard's and Edith's Steins analysis, we need to recognize the value of their approach to sex and gender, which studied woman's and man's identity and differentiation through a hierarchically structured approach that sought to integrate insights gained from the natural sciences, liberal arts and social sciences, and philosophy with insights from theology and the teachings of the Magisterium. It would seem that this hierarchically structured approach could be fruitful today because of its presupposition of the integral unity of the human being, although it would need to update the knowledge gained through the disciplines identified.¹¹⁵ This approach to sex and gender would be multidisciplinary, and it would aim towards an interdisciplinary integration. Finally, this approach could help us to apply the integrated insights of different fields of study to personal questions to the extent that our vocation to be more fully in the image of God includes reference to issues of sex and gender as we

individually and together seek to build up the various communities of persons that are the Church.

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February 15, 1993

1. Research for this article has been partially funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I am grateful for editorial suggestions from Mark Doughty, PhD, Department of Chemistry, Concordia University; Sister Barbara Anne Gooding, RSM, PhD, Faculty of Nursing, McGill University; Christine Jolliffe, PhD Cand., Department of English, McGill University; Sister Mary Kathleen Ronan, S.T.D., and Sister Mary Honora Kroger, RSM, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Health Sciences, Michigan State University.
2. For background information on Hildegard see the following: Francesca Maria Steele, *The Life and Visions of St. Hildegard* (London: Heath, Cranton and Ouseley, 1914), Charles Singer, *From Magic to Science: Essays on the Scientific Twilight* (London: Benn, 1928); and Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), Chapt. 6; and Werner Lauter, *Hildegard-Bibliographie* (Alzey: Verlag der Rheinhess, 1970-1984).
3. Bernard W. Scholz, "Hildegard Von Bingen on the Nature of Woman," *American Benedictine Review* 31.4 (1980): 361-383.
4. Edith Stein describes her experiences working as a nurse in an Austrian medical facility of four-thousand beds for soldiers wounded or afflicted with disease during World War I in Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: 1891-1916* eds. Dr. L. Gelber and Romanaeus Leuven, OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1986), 318-367. While Hildegard's nursing experience was primarily of natural diseases of women, and Edith Stein's of surgery for trauma, and diseases such as typhoid in men, it is clear that both philosophers considered the human body to have a formative role on gender identity. See also, Sabina Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen, 1098-1179: A Visionary Life* (London and New York: Routledge), 80-105.
5. See, Erich Przyara, "Germany," *The Modern Schoolman* X.4 (May, 1993):91-2 for a discussion of Stein's relation to neo-Scholasticism; James Collins, "Edith Stein and the Advance of Phenomenology," *Thought* XII.64 (March, 1942):685-708; Hilda Graef, *The Scholar and the Cross: The Life and Work of Edith Stein* (Westminster, Maryland, 1955); and Josef Stallmach, "The work of Edith Stein: The Tension Between Knowledge and Faith," *Communio* 15 (1988):376-383.
6. While Hildegard's reflections on woman's identity are found spread throughout her writings, Edith Stein's are focused in a series of eight different lectures she gave between 1928 and 1932 and which were brought together into one text *Die Frau* in 1959, then translated as *Essays on Women* in 1987.
7. Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Woman (Daughters of St. Paul, 1988). Many of the main concepts in this text are also formulated in *Original*

Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1981).

8. A preliminary remark needs to be made about vocabulary used in this article. The word "sex" will be used to refer primarily to the biological aspects of male and female identity; while "gender" will be used to emphasize the psycho-social aspects of male and female, and masculine and feminine identity within a man or a woman. Although this usage has a danger of fragmenting the human being in that it separates the biological from the psycho-social aspects of human identity, it will be adopted because it is in accordance with contemporary North-American practice at the present time, but with all due reservation concerning its somewhat limited applicability. The term "complementarity" is used to refer to the theory that man and woman are significantly different but fundamentally equal in dignity and worth. For the philosophical background of this theory of complementarity, see, Sister Prudence Allen, RSM, "Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion," *Communio* 17 (Winter, 1990): 523-543.

9. "Inasmuch as all lower grades are contained in man's structure of being, he occupies a place peculiar to him in this graded structure. His body is a *material body*, but not only that. Rather at the same time, it is an *organism* which is formed and activated from within. Again, man is not only an organism but rather an *organism with a soul* who, in the sensitive manner peculiar to him, is open to himself and his environment. And finally, he is a *spiritual being* who is consciously cognizant of himself and others. All this belongs to the *human species*, and whatever does not evidence this structure of being cannot be termed a *human being*. Edith Stein, "Problems of Women's Education," *Essays on Women*, eds. Dr. L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publication, 1987), 172. The italics are Stein's emphasis. This approach to the human being was also developed by Bernard Lonergan in his 1957 text *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 470. He claimed: "...at any stage of his development a man is an individual, existing unity differentiated by physical, chemical, organic, psychic, and intellectual conjugates." See also, 205-6, 255, 451, and 498.

10. Stein, "Problems," 163-171.

11. It is possible to differentiate hierarchically three natural sciences along the following lines: Physics searches for the most elementary (sub-atomic) particles in the universe; Chemistry studies the properties and reactions of atoms and compounds; and Biology studies the properties of living organisms.

12. Hildegard explored scientific areas outside of questions of sex differentiation as well. Her work on stones, astronomy, herbs, and on the healing arts testifies to her interest in an empirical approach to the world. See, *Liber Simplicis Medicinae*, known also

as *Physica*, and chapter iv translated into German as *Das Buch von den Steinen* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1979; *Liber Compositae Medicinae* known also as *Causa et Curae* and translated into German as *Heilkunde: das Buch von dem Grund und Wesen der Heilung der Krankheiten* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1957), especially chapter iii (about the Four elements, Fire, Air, Water, and Earth); and *Liber Divinorum Operum*, known also as *De Operatione Dei* and translated into English as *Book of Divine Works* (Sante Fe: Bear and Company, 1987). The original Latin works are found in J. B. Pitra, ed. *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis* (1882), vol. 8; and J.P. Migne, ed. *Patrologiae cursus completus: series latina*, (1841-1864), vol. 197. Scholz states that Hildegard "devoted the years from 1150-1157 to the study of nature." 364.

13. Today scientists would claim that elementary sub-atomic or atomic particles have no sex differentiated aspects either in isolation or in relation to one another.

14. Hildegard, *Heilkunde* 124, 93. Translated by Jasmin el Kordi Schmidt as are all subsequent passages from this text.

15. Hildegard, *Heilkunde*, 139-40.

16. Hildegard, *Heilkunde*, 125. An imbalance or excess of one of the humours could lead to illness or death. See also Flanagan, 96-102.

17. Hildegard, *Heilkunde*, 143.

18. Hildegard, *Heilkunde*, 139-145.

19. This is significant because Aristotelian theory had argued that the female's impotence was due to the fact that she had less heat than the male. Presumably this followed from the lesser amount of the element 'fire.' For Hildegard, potency was due to the greater amount of the element 'earth' in the male. See, *Heilkunde*, 125.

20. Hildegard, *Heilkunde*, 138-150.

21. For further detail, see Prudence Allen, RSM, "Hildegard of Bingen's Philosophy of Sex Identity," *Thought* LXIV (September 1989): 231-241.

22. Hildegard of Bingen, *Divine Works*, Part I, Vision Three:12, 71. See also: "In the humours there blooms also the gift of reason so that human beings know what they have to do and must not do...In this way we human beings preserve our sense of reverence and discipline by restraining the impulse of the other humours and bringing our actions under control," 60.

23. Today questions from these disciplines concerning sex and gender identity range from a consideration of the relation of right

and left brain functions in men and women, to sex role stereotypes, to inculcation of masculine and feminine characteristics.

24. Edith Stein, "Problems," 165.

25. Hildegard anticipated this in her work when she analyzed the interactive dynamics of different kinds of men and women. For example, she described the different lived experiences of a woman who is stared at by a man who turns her into a sex object or a man who is a friend: "The eyes of such men can meet squarely with those of the women, much in contrast to those other men's eyes that were fixed on them like arrows." *Heilkunde*, 138. Stein, on the other hand, often referred to examples described by great writers in the Liberal Arts such as Goethe, Sigrid Undset, or Ibsen. "Spirituality," 87-97. Personal experience and works of literature provide early resources for the later more systematic study of gender through the social sciences.

26. Stein, "Problems," 166. "First, every description of an individual must also deal with the concept of his type because the individual as such cannot be understood abstractly. Secondly, definite types are brought into relief by the evidence under study; the structural context is neither simply universal (the same with all beings, without any differentiation), nor is it simply individual (singular to each one, without being common to all.) Third, the types are of practical importance for the methods used in education and medicine; hence the feminine type or a diversity of feminine types is respectively encountered here."

27. Stein, "Problems," 166. See also, 176. Presumably the same positive and negative aspects of a theory of types would be found in contemporary psychological theory such as in Freudian, Jungian, or Transactional analysis.

28. Stein, "Problems," 162, and *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987), 115.

29. Stein, "Problems," Her list includes: maternal type, erotic type, level-headed type, romantic type, and intellectual type in addition to the broader category "mixed-types." She also adds: "types are not to be regarded as naturally given facts which are rigid and unchangeable," 176.

30. Stein, "Problems," 177.

31. *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, Trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), Book Three, Vision 5:13, 377. See also, *Hildegard, Scivias*, Trans. Bruce Hozeski, (Sante Fe, New Mexico: Bear and Company, 1986), 234.

32. Hildegard, *Scivias*, Book Two, Vision 1, 149; and Book, 271. See also Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley/ Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989) where she points out that Hildegard uses her 'weakness' as a medium for the strength of God.

33. Stein, "Problems," 144.

34. Stein, "Spirituality of Christian Women," in *Essays*, 93-94 and 112-113; "Problems," 178-180 and 207; "Woman's Value in National Life," in *Essays*, 148-9 and 251; and *Empathy*. Stein is careful to note that she is not giving an exhaustive list, but rather a selective list of characteristics. She states: "During the last few decades psychology has been much occupied with the psychical differences between the sexes; certainly, experiment and statistics have not revealed much more than what ordinary experience already teaches. I would like to emphasize only two criteria differentiating man from woman from those which are usually mentioned since they have particular significance in helping us understand the intrinsic value of woman.", "Woman's Value," 248.

35. For example, she called St. Bernard, "Gentle father, mildest of men," and approved of the second type of woman who had a "masculine nature." See, Book, 272 and *Heilkunde*, 145. Also see, Newman concerning Hildegard's attacks on an "effeminate age," 238-249.

36. Stein, "Problems," 179. See also, "Principles of Women's Education," in *Essays*, 118.

37. Stein, "Principles," 123-4, "Problems," 210-3, and *Empathy*, 116. Empathy is described as the "basis of inter-subjective experience," because it enables a person to transfer the self into another person's orientation by the exercise of an ability to grasp real analogies." *Empathy*, 63-4. Persons are able to exercise empathy with those who are like them as well as with others who have "differently composed personal structures." *Empathy*, 69. According to Edith Stein, women have a more natural relation to empathy. She refers to "the mother's more sensitive faculty of empathy," and to a "specifically feminine manner of empathy," which considers the other person as a concrete and whole being. "Problems," 207 and "Spirituality," 112-3.

38. Stein, "Problems," 172-3. See, *Mulieris Dignitatem* #18 and #30.

39. This view is also echoed in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #18: "Scientific analysis fully confirms that the very physical constitution of woman is naturally disposed to motherhood---conception, pregnancy and giving birth...What the different branches of science have to say on this subject is important and useful, provided that it is not limited to an exclusively bio-physiological interpretation of woman and motherhood."

40. See, Stein, "Problems," 144-5, where she refers derisively to the "brutal attitude which considers woman merely from the biological point of view;" and "Ethos of Women's Professions," in *Essays*, 47, where she claims that "only subjective delusion could deny that women are capable of practising vocations other than that of spouse and mother."
41. Stein, "Problems," 167.
42. Stein, "Problems," 174.
43. Edith Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, [138] Complete Translation in Augusta Spiegelman Gooch, *Finite and Eternal Being: Attempt at an ascent to the meaning of being*, Ph.D. Diss. University of Dallas, 1981, 197.
44. Stein, "Problems," 171. See also, 167.
45. Stein, *Endliches*, [229ff], 343ff.
46. Hildegard, *Heilkunde*, 126.
47. Hildegard, *Divine Works*, Part One, Vision Four:103, 126 and *Scivias*, Book One, Vision 4:25, 123.
48. Hildegard, *Scivias*, Book One, Vision 4:16, 119-20.
49. Stein, *Endliches*, [117ff], 166 ff and [148ff], 211ff.
50. Stein, "Problems," 162. The passage in full reads as follows: "I have spoken before of the species "woman." By *species* we understand a permanent category which does not change. Thomistic philosophy designates it by the term *form*, meaning an *inner form* which determines structure. The type is not unchanging in the same sense as the species. An individual can develop from one type to another. For instance, this happens in the process when the individual advances from childhood to adolescence and then to adulthood. Hence, this process is prescribed within the individual by an *inner form*....It is quite clear that species is the core of all questions concerning woman. If such a "species" exists, then it cannot be modified by environmental, economic, cultural, or professional factors." See also, "Spirituality," 87-8 and 93 and "Principles," 116-7.
51. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1058a 29-31, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941).
52. See, Prudence Allen, RSM, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution* (Montreal and London: Eden Press, 1985).

53. Stein, "Problems," 177-8. The insertion of [male human] and [female human] enables a more accurate rendering of the passage, for "masculine" and "feminine" are more appropriately considered as types and not as species in Stein's theory.
54. Accidental characteristics, like colour of hair, and so forth, are in the Aristotelian model simply due to matter, and are not considered in the definition of the human being. Edith Stein is making the claim that sex and gender differentiation is not accidental but essential to the respective identities of men and women.
55. Therefore, it is the orientation of the structure that is essentially different in man and woman, not the specific content of the structure itself.
56. References to lived-body soul complex may be found in "Spirituality," 94-5 ; to the faculties in "Ethos of Women's Professions," in *Essays*, 43, "Spirituality," 94-6, 102-3, and 113-7; and to professional work in: "Spirituality," 106, 112-3; "Problems, 148 and 207; "Vocation," 81; "Value," 247-8, 256-7, and "Ethos," 43, 48-9, and especially 42, where she states "first, that certain abiding attitudes are unique to the feminine [female human] soul and form woman's professional life from within out; second, that the very nature of woman draws her to certain professions."
57. Stein, "Church, Woman and Youth," in *Essays* 238. See also "But this nature [of woman] is not uniform but varies according to types and individuals." "Problems," 150.
58. Stein, "Spirituality," 98-9.
59. Stein, "Problems," 173.
60. Stein, "Problems," 179.
61. Stein, "Ethos," 47. Stein also asks: "What does our age demand of women? First of all, it requires most of them to earn their own living." "Principles," 126.
62. Stein, "Ethos," 49. See also "Women's Values," where Stein considers a woman who enters a masculine profession and either "feels forced into conditions of life and work alien to her nature," or if she is strong enough, "she has perhaps succeeded in converting the masculine profession into a feminine one." Also, Stein describes women entering and then mastering, by changing the profession, what had previously been "masculine monopolies, 256.
63. Stein, "Woman's Value," 253.
64. Stein, "Spirituality," 109.

65. Stein, *Spirituality*, 108-9.
66. Stein, "Problems," 174.
67. See, Newman, 11-12.
68. In Carmel she received the name "Teresa Benedicta of the Cross," and wrote *The Science of the Cross: A Study of St. John of the Cross* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960) as well as the massive volume on Finite and Eternal Being mentioned above. See also, John H. Nota, "Edith Stein, Woman of the Church," *Communio* 14 (1984):451-462.
69. Hildegard, *Divine Works*, 8.2, 207. See also Prudence Allen, RSM, "Two Medieval Views on Woman's Identity: Hildegard of bingen and Thomas Aquinas," *Studies in Religion* 16.1 (Winter 1987):21-36.
70. Hildegard, *Divine Works*, Part One, Vision Four:100, 123.
71. Stein, "Woman's Value," 252.
72. Stein, "Woman's Value," 253.
73. Stein, "Problems, 191.
74. Barbara Newman has developed these aspects of Hildegard's thought beautifully in *Sister of Wisdom* and "Some Mediaeval Theologians and the Sophia Tradition," *The Downside Review*. 108 (April 1990): 111-130.
75. This view is developed in detail by Pope John Paul II in his explication of the Theology of the Body in *Original Unity*, 25. See especially, "The latter is based on masculinity and femininity, as if on two different ways of "being a body," of the same human being, created "in the image of God" (Gn. 1:27), 62; "The theology of the body, which, right from the beginning, is bound up with the creation of man in the image of God, becomes, in a way, also the theology of sex, or rather the theology of masculinity and femininity, which has as its starting point here, in the Book of Genesis," 74; and "Man, whom God created 'male and female,' bears the divine image imprinted on his body 'from the beginning;' man and woman constitute, as it were, two different ways of the human 'being a body' in the unity of that image," 102.
76. Stein, *Endliches*, [418], 654.
77. Stein, *Endliches*, [425], 654.
78. Stein, *Endliches*, [426], 655-656; see also [343ff], 605ff; [418], 644; [423], 650ff. She also describes the soul as the mediator between spirit and body, and the interior of the soul as

the "midpoint" of the bodily-physichal-spiritual being." [393], 605 and [405], 624.

79. Stein, *Endliches* [336], 517 and [345], 531.

80. Stein, *Endliches* [347], 534.

81. See Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, 'The Woman and the Serpent,' chapt.3, 89-120.

82. Hildegard, *Scivias* Book I, Vision 2:27. The first, more literal translation is by Mother Columba Hart, OSB, 86; and the second, more interpretive translation is by Bruce Hozeski, 19.

83. Stein, "Vocations of Man and Woman," 60. See also, 65, 68-9 and "Problems," 186-7.

84. Stein, "Vocations," 71. This view is repeated in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 10: "This 'domination' indicates the disturbance and loss of the stability of the fundamental equality which the man and woman possess in the 'unity of the two': and this is especially to the disadvantage of the woman, whereas only the equality resulting from their dignity as persons can give to their mutual relationship the character of an authentic 'communio personarum.'"

85. Stein, "Vocations," 72 and "Problems," 180.

86. Stein, "Problems," 180.

87. Stein, "Problems," 141.

88. Stein, "Vocations," 63. This emphasis upon an "original order" is developed in considerable detail by Pope John Paul II in his homilies on the book of *Genesis*, see *Original Unity of Man and Woman* especially chapters entitled: "Boundary between Original Innocence and Redemption," "Original Unity of Man and Woman", "By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God," and "Original Innocence and Man's Historical State." His views are consistant with those initially proposed by Stein with the exception that he places a greater emphasis on the original equality of man and woman rather than on the pre-eminance of man. See, *Mulieris Dignitatem* #6 in which the equality of man and woman is emphasized.

89. Stein, "Vocations," 68-9. See also, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 30.

90. "Problems," 194.

91. Hildegard, *Scivias*, Book 1, Vision 5:1, 133. See also, Book II Vision 2:6, 237 where this woman "was joined with Him in happy betrothal and nobly dowered with His body and blood."

92. Hildegard, *Scivias*, Book II, Vision 6:3, 240.
93. Hildegard, *Scivias*, Book II, Vision 5:26-35. According to Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, Hildegard did note that women were barred from clerical priesthood, but it did not much matter to her as she believed it was an inferior state of Christian life to the Religious state which was open to women, 214.
94. Stein, "Vocations," 84. Stein also considers the question of women and clerical priesthood. She argues that it does not seem to be forbidden by dogma, but rather by tradition, and by the fact that Christ, who came as a male human being is better represented in the official capacity of priesthood by other male human beings. See also, "Problems," 149.
95. Stein, "Problems," 194.
96. Stein, "Vocations," 84-5. See also, "We therefore achieve total humanity through Him and simultaneously, the right personal attitude," "Woman's Value," 252.
97. Stein, "Ethos," 56. See also, "...the image of God is established as a duty, vocation, or destiny of mankind---, i.e. of man and of woman," "Problems," 174.
98. Stein, "Vocations," 57.
99. Stein, "Vocations," 58. See also, 82-3.
100. See Stein, "Ethos," 50-51 where she identifies missionary work and preaching as masculine, although women in teaching orders partake in this aspect; she identifies works of charity and sacrifice as feminine; and finally she suggests contemplation and participation in the liturgy "transcends difference in sex."
101. Stein, "Principles," 116-117; and see Freda Mary Oben, "Edith Stein as Educator," *Thought* 65.257 (June 1990):113-125; and Mary Catharine Baseheart, "Edith Stein's Philosophy of Woman and of Woman's Education," *Hypatia* 4.1 (Spring 1989): 120-131.
102. Stein. "Principles," 116-7.
103. Stein, "Principles," 117.
104. Stein, "Principles," 117-8.
105. See, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #24.
106. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #24.
107. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #25 and #6.

108. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #10. The emphasis is the Holy Father's in the original text.

109. Pope John Paul II, *Original Unity*, 68, note 5.

110. Stein, "Woman's Value," 250-2.

111. See Edith Stein, *Endliches*, [428], 658, where she rejects the Trinitarian rationale for a theology of integral sex complementarity. "The way out of seeking for three personalities in a plurality of spiritual person (perhaps, man-woman, and child) is refused by Augustine as by Thomas. It is, indeed the single man in which the image of God is supposed to be found, independent of whether others exist or not."

112. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #7.

113. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #118.

114. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #30. See also, #14 and #18.

115. This integrated approach to the human being also overcomes the problems with the Cartesian mentality which fragments the mind from body, and lends itself to a unisex model of human identity.